

**Abstract**

5 A data storage system for storing data for a host processor includes  
physical data storage devices each having data storage attributes and an outboard  
storage manager. The outboard storage manager is operable with the physical data  
storage devices for presenting to the host processor a virtual data storage image  
having a desired data storage attribute for a particular data storage application by  
organizing the physical data storage devices in an arrangement suitable for  
providing the desired data storage attribute irrespective of the data storage  
attributes of the physical data storage devices such that the combined physical data  
10 storage device arrangement emulates the virtual data storage image. The outboard  
storage manager is operable to transfer data between the host processor and the  
organized physical data storage device arrangement via the virtual data storage  
image.